

**Margaret Smith-Hale**  
*Executive Director*

February 26, 2011

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**Testimony to the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut  
General Assembly**

**Distinguished Committee Members:**

This testimony is in support of the Connecticut Commission on  
Aging

ITNNorthCentralConnecticut™ is a community-supported nonprofit that offers "door-through-door" rides to seniors and adults with visual impairments in ten towns in North Central Connecticut. This alternative program is unique and uses volunteer drivers who provide rides 24/7 in private vehicles. There is no restriction on the purpose of a ride and help is offered to carry packages, fold walkers, and open doors. We are a critical link to helping frail seniors maintain a healthy life.

The Connecticut Commission on Aging has been instrumental in bringing this program to Connecticut. In April of 2008 they took the lead and worked with three state senators to make permanent changes to the state livery laws. These changes were required to continue to use volunteers as drivers and to operate without government funding.

The United Nations estimates that the number of people 65 and older is expected to more than double worldwide, to about 1.5 billion by 2050. This means that people 65 and over will soon outnumber children under 5 for the first time ever. Standard & Poor's wrote in a recent report "that no other force is likely to shape the future of national economic health, public finances and policy making as the irreversible rate at which the world's population is aging."

We need the Commission on Aging to be independent so that they can continue to create innovative solutions to the needs of our aging population. They utilize an extensive and diverse network of relationships across state agencies and branches of government. Services like ours reduce costs and save the taxpayers' money.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Margaret Smith Hale  
Executive Director